


# PRUDENCE OF THE PARSONAGE

by  
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ILLUSTRATED BY  
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IT WAS A LUSCIOUS APPLE THAT GOT OLD MOTHER EVE INTO TROUBLE, AND APPLES IT IS THAT MAKE TROUBLE FOR CONNIE AND THE TWINS.

Mr. Starr, a widower Methodist minister, has been assigned to the congregation at Mount Mark, Ia. He has five daughters, Prudence, the eldest, who keeps house; Fairy, Carol and Lark, who are twins, and Constance. Their advent stirs the curiosity of all Mount Mark, and members of the Ladies' Aid lose no time in getting acquainted and asking a million questions. Prudence, who is nineteen, has her hands full with the mischievous twins and Connie, but is moved to defend them valiantly when some of the good ladies of the congregation suggest that an older woman is needed to run the family.

## CHAPTER III—Continued.

"Indeed they are not," cried Prudence loyally. "They are young, lively, mischievous, I know—and I am glad of it. But I have lived with them ever since they were born, and I ought to know them. They are unselfish, they are sympathetic, they are always generous. They do foolish and irritating things—but never things that are hateful and mean. They are all right at heart, and that is all that counts. They are not bad girls! What have they done today? They were exasperating, and humiliating, too, but what did they do that was really mean? They embarrassed and mortified me, but not intentionally! I can't punish them for the effect on me, you know! Would that be just or fair? At heart, they meant no harm."

It must be confessed that there were many serious faces among the Ladies. Some cheeks were flushed, some eyes were downcast, some lips were compressed and some were trembling. Every mother there was asking in her heart, "Did I punish my children just for the effect on me? Did I judge my children by what was in their hearts, or just by the trouble they made me?" And the silence lasted so long that it became awkward. Finally Mrs. Prentiss crossed the room and stood by Prudence's side. She laid a hand tenderly on the young girl's arm, and said in a voice that was slightly tremulous: "I believe you are right, my dear. It is what girls are at heart that really counts. I believe your sisters are all you say they are. And one thing I am very sure of—they are happy girls to have a sister so patient and loving and just. Not all real mothers have as much to their credit!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### A Secret Society.

Carol and Lark, in keeping with their twinning, were the dearest chums and comrades. To them the great, rambling barn back of the parsonage was a most delightful place. It had a big cowshed on one side, and horse stalls on the other, with a "heavenly" haymow over all, and with "chutes" for the descent of hay—and twins!

Now the twins had a secret society—of which they were the founders, the officers and the membership body. Its name was Skull and Crossbones. Lark furnished the brain power for the organization, but her sister was an enthusiastic and energetic second. Carol's club name was Lady Gwendolyn, and Lark's was Sir Alfred Angelcourt ordinarily, although subject to frequent change. The old barn saw stirring times after the coming of the new parsonage family.

"Hark! Hark!" sounded a hissing whisper from the corner, and Connie, eavesdropping outside the barn, shivered sympathetically.

"What is it! Oh, what is it?" wailed the unfortunate lady.

"Look! Look! Run for your life!" Then while Connie clutched the barn door in a frenzy, there was a sound of rattling corn as the twins scrambled upward, a silence, a low thud, and an unromantic "Ouch!" as Carol bumped her head and stumbled.

"Are you assaulted?" shouted the bold Sir Alfred, and Connie heard a wild scuffle as he rescued his companion from the clutches of the old halter on which she had stumbled. Up the haymow ladder they hurried, and then slid recklessly down the hay chutes. Presently the barn door was flung open, and the "society" knocked Connie flying backward, ran madly around the barn a few times, and scurried under the fence and into the chicken coop.

A little later Connie, assailed with shots of corncobs, ran bitterly toward the house. "Peeking" was strictly forbidden when the twins were engaged in Skull and Crossbones activities.

And Connie's soul burned with desire. She felt that this secret society was threatening not only her happiness, but also her health, for she could not sleep for horrid dreams of Skulls and Crossbones at night, and could not eat for envying the twins their secret and mysterious joys. Finally she applied to Prudence, and received assistance.

The afternoon mail brought to the parsonage an envelope addressed to "Misses Carol and Lark Starr, the Methodist Parsonage, Mount Mark, Iowa," and in the lower left-hand corner was a suggestive drawing of a Skull and Crossbones. The eyes of the mischievous twins twinkled with delight when they saw it, and they carried it to the barn for prompt perusal. It read as follows:

Miss Constance Starr humbly and respectfully craves admittance into the Ancient and Honorable Organization of Skull and Crossbones.

The twins pondered long on a fitting reply, and the next afternoon the postman brought a letter for Connie, waiting impatiently for it. She had approached the twins about it at noon that day.

"Did you get my application?" she had whispered nervously.

But the twins had stared her out of countenance, and Connie realized that she had committed a serious breach of secret society etiquette.

But here was the letter! Her fingers trembled as she opened it. It was decorated lavishly with skulls and crossbones, splashed with red ink, supposedly blood, and written in the same suggestive color.

Skull and Crossbones, great in mercy and in condescension, has listened graciously to the prayer of Constance, the Seeker. Hear the will of the Great Spirit: If the Seeker will, for the length of two weeks, submit herself to the will of Skull and Crossbones, she shall be admitted into the Ancient and Honorable Order.

The week that followed was a gala one for the twins of Skull and Crossbones. Constance swept their room, made their bed, washed their dishes, did their chores, and in every way behaved as a model pledge of the ancient and honorable. The twins were gracious but firm. There was no arguing and no faltering. "It is the will of Skull and Crossbones that the damsel do this," they would say. And the damsel did it.

Prudence did not feel it was a case that called for her interference. So she sat back and watched, while the twins told stories, read and frolicked, and Constance did their daily tasks.

A week passed, ten days, and twelve. Then came a golden October afternoon when the twins sat in the haymow looking out upon a mellow world. Constance was in the yard, reading a fairy story. The situation was a tense one, for the twins were hungry, and time was heavy on their hands.

"The apple trees in Avery's orchard are just loaded," said Lark. "And there are lots on the ground, too. I saw them when I was out in the field this morning."

Carol gazed down into the yard where Constance was absorbed in her book. "Constance oughtn't to read as much as she does," she argued. "It's so bad for the eyes."

"Yes, and what's more, she's been getting off too easy for the last few days. The time is nearly up."

"That's so," said Lark. "Let's call her up here." This was done at once, and the unfortunate Constance stood before them respectfully, as they had instructed her to stand. The twins hesitated, each secretly hoping the other would voice the order. But Lark, as usual, was obliged to be the spokesman.

"Damsel," she said, "It is the will of Skull and Crossbones that you hie ye to yonder orchard—Avery's I mean—and bring hither some of the golden apples basking in the sun."

"What!" ejaculated Connie, startled out of her respect.

Carol frowned.

Connie hastened to modify her tone. "Did they say you might have them?" she inquired politely.

"That concerns thee not; 'tis for thee only to render obedience to the orders of the Society. Go out through our field and sneak under the fence where the wires are loose, and hurry back. We're awfully hungry. The trees are near the fence. There isn't any danger."

"But it's stealing," objected Connie. "What will Prudence—"

"Damsel!" And Connie turned to obey with despair in her heart.

"Bring twelve," Carol called after her, "that'll be four apiece. And hurry, Connie. And see they don't catch you while you're about it."

After she had gone the twins lay back thoughtfully on the hay and stared at the cobwebby roof above them in silence for a while. Something was hurting them, but whether it was their fear of the wrath of Prudence, or the twinges of tender consciences—who can say?

"She's an unearthly long time about it," exclaimed Lark at last. "Do you suppose they caught her?"

This was an awful thought, and the girls were temporarily suffocated. But they heard the barn door swinging beneath them, and sighed with relief. It was Connie! She climbed the ladder skillfully, and poured her golden treasure before the arch-thieves, Skull and Crossbones.

There were eight big, tempting apples.

"Hum! Eight!" said Carol sternly. "I said twelve."

"Yes, but I was afraid someone was coming. I heard such a noise through the grapevines, so I got what I could and ran for it. There's three apiece for you, and two for me," said Connie, sitting down sociably beside them on the hay.

But Carol rose. "Damsel, begone," she ordered. "When Skull and Crossbones feast, thou canst not yet share the festive board. Rise thee, and speed."

Connie rose, and walked soberly toward the ladder. But before she disappeared she fired this parting shot. "I don't want any of them. Stolen apples don't taste very good, I reckon."

Carol and Lark had the grace to flush a little at this, but however the stolen apples tasted, the twins had no



"I Got What I Could and Ran."

difficulty in disposing of them. Then, full almost beyond the point of comfort, they slid down the hay chutes, went out the back way, turned the corner, and came quietly in through the front door of the parsonage.

Prudence was in the kitchen preparing the evening meal. Fairy was in the sitting room, busy with her books. The twins set the table conscientiously, filled the woodbox, and in every way labored irreproachably. But Prudence had no word of praise for them that evening. She hardly seemed to know they were about the place. She went about her work with a pale face, and never a smile to be seen.

Supper was nearly ready when Connie sauntered in from the barn. After leaving the haymow, she had found a cozy corner in the corner, with two heavy laprobes discarded by the twins in their flight from wolves, and had settled down there to finish her story. As she stepped into the kitchen Prudence turned to her with such a sorry, reproachful gaze that Connie was frightened.

"Are you sick, Prue?" she gasped. Prudence did not answer. She went to the door and called Fairy. "Finish getting supper, will you, Fairy? And when you are all ready, you and the twins go right on eating. Don't wait for father—he isn't coming home until evening. Come upstairs with me, Connie; I want to talk to you."

Connie followed her sister soberly, and the twins flashed at each other startling and questioning looks.

The three girls were at table when Prudence came into the dining room alone. She fixed a tray-supper quietly and carried it off upstairs. Then she came back and sat down by the table. But her face bore marks of tears, and she had no appetite. The twins had felt small liking for their food before; now each mouthful seemed to choke them. But they dared not ask a question. They were devoutly thankful when Fairy finally voiced their interest.

"What is the matter? Has Connie been in mischief?"

"It's worse than that," faltered Prudence, tears rushing to her eyes again.

"Why, Prudence! What in the world has she done?"

"I may as well tell you, I suppose—you'll have to know it sooner or later. She went out into Avery's orchard and stole some apples this afternoon. I was back in the alley seeing if Mrs. Moon could do the washing, and I saw her from the other side. She went from tree to tree, and when she got through the fence she ran. There's no mistake about it—she confessed." The twins looked up in agony, but Prudence's face reassured them. Constance had told no tales. "I have told her she must spend all of her time upstairs alone for a week, taking her meals there, too. She will go to school, of course, but that is all. I want her to see the awfulness of it. I told her I didn't think we wanted to eat with a thief—just yet! I said we must get used to the idea of it first. She is heartbroken, but—I must make her see it!"

If you were in Prudence's place would you turn in and give Connie and the twins each a sound spanking—as the most effective sort of punishment?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## BETRAYED BY FURTIVE SNORE

Burglar's Misfortune Was That He Fell Asleep in Home He Had Intended to Rob.

Conviction of Walter Jones, a one-legged burglar, in the criminal court here, brought out an unusual incident of house-breaking, a Birmingham (Ala.) correspondent of the New York World says.

The story of the burglary and capture, as told by the evidence, showed that Jones, in his effort to rob the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Vennon, an old couple of the suburbs, crawled under the bed and waited for them to retire.

The burglar himself fell asleep, and his snoring aroused Mr. Vennon, who undertook to light a lamp, which exploded. This awoke the burglar, who threatened Mrs. Vennon with death if she gave the alarm.

Just then Mr. Vennon grappled with the burglar, who leaped out of a window. The burglar had left his wooden leg under the bed.

By following single foot-prints the police pursued the peg-legged robber to his refuge. With the assistance of a pal, Jones made another wooden leg, with which he went to his shanty in the woods. Suddenly the police arrived and Jones dived through the rear window.

In the back yard the mud was deep, and the wooden leg sank so far in the mire it stuck firm. Jones hobbled on desperately without it, but was overtaken while hopping on one foot.

Both the original and second wooden legs were exhibited as evidence.

## Pleasure in Well-Doing.

Pleasure has a way of coming indirectly—where least you look for her and when least you expect her. She lurks in the happiness of work well done. She lingers in the consciousness of honest bookkeeping with life, and she always is to be found in the joy of growth and progress. In all these ways honest pleasure is to be found.

This isn't meant to be a dull preaching against anything but work. But it does mean to say that happiness lies in doing and the consciousness of well-doing.

## Missouri's Lead Output.

The demand from Europe in 1915 for lead to be used for war purposes caused the output of Missouri mines to break all previous records in the quantity of lead ore placed on the market that year, the amount being 195,634 tons in smelted or refined shape, which was worth \$18,389,596, or just about enough to build and equip an up-to-date dreadnaught for the United States navy.

## Force of Habit.

"I judge our new acquaintance has been married for some time."  
"What makes you think so?"  
"He is such a good listener and assents to everything you say."

## No Allurement.

"Some day you'll be rich enough to retire from business."  
"Give up my nice pleasant offices and stay home?" rejoined Mr. Growcher. "I should say not!"

With the Fingers!  
Says Corns Lift Out  
Without Any Pain

You reckless men and women who are pestered with corns and who have at least once a week invited an awful death from lockjaw or blood poison are now told by a Cincinnati authority to use a drug called freezone, which the moment a few drops are applied to any corn or callous the soreness is relieved and soon the entire corn or callous, root and all, lifts off with the fingers.

Freezone dries the moment it is applied, and simply shrivels the corn or callous without inflaming or even irritating the surrounding tissue or skin. A small bottle of freezone will cost very little at any of the drug stores, but will positively rid one's feet of every hard or soft corn or hardened callous. If your druggist hasn't any freezone he can get it at any wholesale drug house for you.

He—When I was 4 years old I was left an orphan.

She—What did you do with it?—The Orange Peel.

IF BACK HURTS  
BEGIN ON SALTS

Flush your kidneys occasionally if you eat meat regularly.

No man or woman who eats meat regularly can make a mistake by flushing the kidneys occasionally, says a well-known authority. Meat forms uric acid which clogs the kidney pores so they sluggishly filter or strain only part of the waste and poisons from the blood, then you get sick. Nearly all rheumatism, headaches, liver trouble, nervousness, constipation, dizziness, sleeplessness, bladder disorders come from sluggish kidneys.

The moment you feel a dull ache in the kidneys or your back hurts, or if the urine is cloudy, offensive, full of sediment, irregular of passage or attended by a sensation of scalding, get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any reliable pharmacy and take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia and has been used for generations to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to activity, also to neutralize the acids in urine so it no longer causes irritation, thus ending bladder disorders.

Jad Salts is inexpensive and cannot injure; makes a delightful effervescent lithia-water drink which all regular meat eaters should take now and then to keep the kidneys clean and the blood pure, thereby avoiding serious kidney complications.

"That man is in a grave revery."  
"Yes; I noticed he was buried in thought."—Baltimore American.

TO OBTAIN THE  
HIGHEST DEGREE  
OF EFFICIENCY

Special attention must be paid to the diet, and regularity must be promoted in the stomach, Liver and Bowels.

You can help Nature wonderfully by trying  
HOSTETTER'S  
Stomach Bitters

"A perfect wife never nags," says a writer in an exchange. That's true. And a perfect husband never gives cause for nagging.—Baltimore Star.

**Alcock**  
PLASTERS  
The World's Greatest External Remedy.



Pain in Side, Rheumatism, Backache, Any Local Pain.

Insist on Having ALLCOCK'S.